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COMMEMORATION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

STRENGTHENING OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Letter dated 12 October 1995 from the representatives of Egypt and Senegal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Acting upon instructions from our Governments, we have the pleasure to transmit to you herewith the text of a declaration entitled "The Parliamentary Vision for International Cooperation into the 21st Century", adopted by the special session of the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union held at United Nations Headquarters from 30 August to 1 September 1995 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations (see annex).

We have further the pleasure to request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda items 29, 150 and 163.

(Signed) Nabil ELARABY
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Permanent Representative of Egypt
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ANNEX

[Original: English/French/
Spanish]

The Parliamentary Vision for International Cooperation into the 21st Century

Declaration adopted by the special session of the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held at United Nations Headquarters from 30 August to 1 September 1995 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations

The Inter-Parliamentary Union, which hailed the founding of the United Nations, has always strived to support the action of the world organization of governments whose objectives it shares. The IPU was pleased to accept the invitation of the UN Secretary-General to hold a special session in the UN General Assembly Hall in New York to mark the first half-century of the world organization.

The special session of the Inter-Parliamentary Council was chaired by its President, Dr Ahmed Fathy Sorour, President of the Egyptian People's Assembly. It opened with a speech by the UN Secretary-General, Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who stressed that democratization had become one of the main objectives of the United Nations as well as its driving force. He also spoke of the importance of parliamentary action on the world scene.

Two hundred and fifty representatives from 73 national parliaments and nine regional assemblies, as well as 31 observer-organizations, took part in the session. Its work began with a presentation by Ambassador Richard Butler, Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the UN 50th anniversary and Australian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, of the main issues at stake for future international co-operation.

At the end of the debate, participants adopted the enclosed Declaration and set of Comprehensive Findings and Recommendations in which they laid out their "Parliamentary Vision for International Co-operation into the 21st Century". The IPU hopes that this meeting will lay the foundation for a new relationship with the UN, and these texts will give some impetus to international co-operation by providing the world community with food for thought as it tackles the challenges confronting people on the eve of a new century.

The parliamentary vision for international co-operation into the 21st century

1. A half-century ago, **"we, the peoples of the United Nations"** resolved through the governments of the time to combine efforts to maintain security and strengthen universal peace, foster the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all, and promote the economic and social advancement of all peoples. Thus the political institutions of the United Nations system were established.

2. Today, **we, members of the parliaments our peoples** have elected to direct national governments, reaffirm the soaring vision and common purposes that animated the drafters of the United Nations Charter. Together with its family of agencies the United Nations is the embodiment of a powerful idea, that of world community. It is to strengthening the bonds of that community that we now rededicate ourselves and our nations.

3. The notion of **world community** is an unquestionable reality today. People are linked across national borders by shared networks of communication and information, production and trade, large-scale travel and population movements. Ideas and news, goods and capital, visitors, refugees and migrants move across borders with astonishing speed. So do diseases, drugs, environmental degradation and financial upheavals. The threats to national sovereignty today come not from the world's multilateral institutions, but from the problems and forces sweeping across State boundaries that no single government can control on its own.

4. Over one hundred years ago far-sighted parliamentarians realized that humanity had a shared interest in maintaining peace and promoting economic and social progress and in building workable international machinery to achieve those goals. To that end they created the first institution of multilateral co-operation, the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Since then the **structures for international co-operation** have evolved, and today the United Nations system provides the means for attaining our common ends.

5. Over the years, the World Organization has successfully established international law, set international standards, and devised international programmes in every field of human endeavour. We acknowledge the system's limited powers. The **United Nations** is not a world government. Regulating the every-day life of the world's peoples is a task that cannot be relinquished by national parliaments which are closer and directly accountable to their citizens. It is rightly we who decide for each of our nations whether to assume binding international obligations and how to implement them.

6. The end of the cold war raised hopes for a better sense of common interest and reinforced multilateral co-operation. But, recent years have been marked by the resurgence of narrow nationalism which has exacerbated inter- and intra-State conflicts and fuelled a very worrying trend away from multilateralism. Hence the urgent and imperative duty for the international community to reverse that trend and strengthen the sense of common purpose so as to work together for the solution of the problems facing humanity. We therefore make a **solemn appeal for a renewed commitment to multilateral co-operation**.

7. Common efforts are now urgently needed to build a more secure, a more just, and a more free world. In the attached Comprehensive Findings and Recommendations we have set out an agenda containing detailed suggestions for future international action to attain these noble goals by promoting peace and security, sustainable human development, and human rights and democracy. The Inter-Parliamentary Council commends these Findings and Recommendations to the attention of governments and the organizations of the United Nations system.

8. In preparing to meet the challenges of the coming century, we recognize that much in the **United Nations system requires reform**. Yet, we believe that blunt denial of financial resources does not make for reforms; rather, reform may be expected in its turn to generate savings. Too many

agencies operate with too little accountability, answerable to neither the central political organs of the United Nations nor the elected leaders of member States. We call for the introduction of more stringent methods of accountability coupled with a systematic effort to streamline the system and do away with overlapping mandates.

9. The United Nations system relies on a mix of **assessed and voluntary contributions** from its member States to finance its activities. As parliamentarians, we are acutely aware of the need to assure the most effective use of the financial resources that, on behalf of the citizens, we vote to provide to public purposes. We demand a high level of performance from the international organizations that our taxes support, no less than we do from domestic programmes. We acknowledge the obligation of all our member legislative bodies to provide, in full and on time, the contributions that represent their duly assessed share of organization expenses. We must see to it that each of our governments fulfils its financial commitment in accordance with the Charter.

10. At the United Nations, the **General Assembly** needs to be revived and provided with enhanced authority and effectiveness. This is even more true of the **Economic and Social Council** at a time when effective co-ordination of international agencies dealing with complex economic, environmental, and social problems becomes ever more urgent.

11. The **Secretary-General** has to be able to exercise clearer authority to ensure enhanced performance by United Nations personnel and UN bodies, overcome bureaucratic immobilism and articulate forcefully the global interest when leaders of individual nations are preoccupied with contradictory and narrow national concerns.

12. The authority and credibility of the **Security Council** have grown substantially in recent years as its members have rediscovered a sense of common purpose in confronting dangers to peace and security. But even as we applaud the Council's belated fulfilment of its Charter mandate, we call for its reform to make it more representative while at the same time maintaining its authority and effectiveness. The Council requires an increase in membership to involve more States; its deliberations should become more transparent and its mechanisms more democratic. Moreover, it is imperative to put an end to double standards, and instead insure the full implementation of all resolutions and decisions of the Council. This holds particularly true for the deplorable situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

13. **Parliaments**, composed of men and women elected by the people of each nation, play an essential role in assuring the national implementation of commitments undertaken by governments in United Nations assemblies. Parliaments represent the will of the people in the political process of every nation. Therefore, we encourage the United Nations to work more closely with parliaments and call for a formal agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union to associate member State parliaments, through their Union, more directly in the political work of the international community.

14. Since its creation, the United Nations has provided the vehicle for the development of human rights and fundamental freedoms and has forged international understanding of concepts as diverse as protection of the environment, law of the sea, equality between men and women, rights of the child. It has kept the peace in numerous trouble spots, presided over the decolonization process, fostered development and brought protection and urgently needed assistance to millions of persons in distress in every corner of the globe. At the same time, many of the Charter's promises still remain unfulfilled. Even so, it is through the United Nations that, as the Charter proclaims, we can "combine our efforts" to achieve the common ends of all humanity. On behalf of its member parliaments, the Inter-Parliamentary Union pledges to play its part in **converting the Charter's promise into reality** and demonstrate that the United Nations can be purposeful and successful in meeting the challenges that confront all peoples on the eve of the twenty-first century.

COMPREHENSIVE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

1. The world is radically different from when the United Nations was created 50 years ago. In half a century, it has changed in almost every respect and with a speed such as humanity has never witnessed before.

2. The world has grown. Fifty years ago, the community of nations consisted of 66 sovereign States. Today, there are no less than 190. Then, the world population numbered two-and-a-half billion. Today, it has more than doubled. There has been a remarkable growth in industrial and agricultural output and trade, with the world economy increasing sixfold and world trade several times more. The world has grown richer and, overall, per capita income has increased. So also, however, have inequalities, both within and between nations, and today almost one fourth of the world's population is living in absolute poverty.

3. But the world has also shrunk. Extraordinary progress in communications today makes it possible to cover distances in a few hours which only fifty years ago required days and weeks of travel. Events can be followed directly as they unfold on the other side of the globe. Today's world is increasingly described as the *global village* to signify a smaller world and one which is dramatically more interdependent than ever before. Economic activities of all sorts, at home and abroad, by national and transnational companies, investment, trade and cross border flows of capital tie the world's nations closer together, as does the growing realization that the world's resources are finite.

4. The world has progressed, but remains an insecure place. Fifty years ago it witnessed the beginning of the development of weapons of mass destruction and the onset of the cold war. Today that conflict has ended after having dominated international relations since the Second World War. Not so, however, the dangers linked to the production and proliferation of nuclear weapons. They remain, as do the dangers resulting from the production, proliferation and use of mines, biological and chemical weapons and, indeed, conventional arms of all types including small arms. And, while armed conflicts between States are today relatively rare, the number and intensity of conflicts within States have grown dramatically, throwing entire nations into complete turmoil.

5. The world and international relations are infinitely more complex than before. Not only has the East-West conflict receded, but the bipolar world to which it gave rise has ended. Today, neither South nor North are homogeneous entities. The population in countries within each entity grows according to a multitude of different patterns and experiences vastly differing political, social and economic developments. There are today countries in the South which are considerably more developed than some of the countries in the North.

6. Throughout, the world has greatly benefited from the United Nations. The World Organization has provided the vehicle for the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the subsequent development and codification of an extensive catalogue of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It has been the crucible where States have developed and forged international understanding of concepts as diverse as protection of the environment, law of the sea, equality between men and women and the rights of the child. And the United Nations has kept the peace in numerous trouble spots, presided over the decolonization process, fostered development and brought protection and urgently needed assistance to millions of refugees and other persons in distress in every corner of the globe. Yet, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, many unfinished tasks remain.

7. Here then lie the challenges on the eve of the 21st century. To create a more secure planet where might does not necessarily mean right, where humanity's common future is built on co-operation, not confrontation and imposition. To bring about a more just planet, where the material

conditions of humanity are improved and no individual suffers from want; where the social fabric of States is strengthened and the world's finite resources are managed wisely to the benefit of all. And to build a more free world based on equality and full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

PEACE AND SECURITY

8. Ensuring peace and security in this and the next century represents a formidable challenge. Yet, it must and can be achieved. *An Agenda for Peace* and its supplement provide an important basis on which to build future action and which will have to be further refined in the light of recent years' experience. While peace and security have military aspects, the quest for a more secure world can only be successful if mankind learns also to understand and address their economic, social, environmental and, not least, human dimensions.

9. Peace requires ending existing wars as well as preventing future ones. To do so, the world must also learn how to cope with the growing number of conflicts within States lest they become a permanent feature of the next century. The cost of such conflicts to the populations concerned and the international community as a whole have long since ceased to be acceptable. The leaders of parties to existing or potential conflicts who may be tempted by the prospect of a potential victory through force of arms must measure the short and medium-term benefits of a negotiated solution against the risks of the military option which always entails indiscriminate and large-scale destruction and useless human suffering.

10. War as a continuation of politics by other means should not be considered legitimate. Armed force should not be used, except in legitimate self-defence or in the common interest of the international community as a whole. Like its founders over a century ago, IPU remains committed to political negotiation and dialogue, not armed confrontation. In the same spirit, it calls on all parties to settle disputes through peaceful means and to make better use of existing international arbitration bodies and tribunals to this effect, thus contributing to the work of the United Nations and, in particular, the action foreseen in Chapter VI of the UN Charter.

11. It is, more than ever before, necessary to strive for a world based on tolerance and respect for international law. The humanitarian law instruments must be universally ratified and their practical implementation ensured nationally through effective legislation, mechanisms and programmes both in inter- and intra-State conflicts. Parties to these treaties have undertaken not only to implement their provisions but also to ensure their respect by others. States must live up to these commitments, both at home and abroad.

12. Ensuring respect requires a reinforced system of sanctions which in turn means having recourse to the judiciary. Much better use than hitherto can and should be made of existing channels for judicial action, both nationally and internationally, to ensure respect for international law. Judicial action is also required to punish war criminals. Impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity is totally unacceptable and no effort must be spared to apprehend and punish the perpetrators. To be successful, this requires also that the principle of individual responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity be upheld regardless of the nature of the conflict. While insisting that States make full use of existing national jurisdictions, a permanent international tribunal should be established where those suspected of committing such crimes can be brought to trial.

13. Arms control and disarmament must be pursued at the regional and world level with renewed urgency with the objective of achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons under effective international control. The indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is an important step, but it is imperative to conclude a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty which achieves zero option by 1996, and another on prohibition of production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. At the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, the nuclear weapons States committed themselves to exercise utmost restraint in nuclear testing until a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty is concluded. We call for this commitment to be honoured in view of the nuclear tests which have been carried out or were announced recently. Work must also be carried out to expand in all parts of the world nuclear-weapon-free zones

which already exist in some areas.

14. Arms regulation must be reinforced for conventional arms. Excessive arms build-ups destabilize regional and international peace and security and adversely affect national stability and economic and social development. Illicit arms dealing has particularly deleterious effects on countries' internal stability and on respect for human rights. The existing register of arms transfers must therefore be used fully and total transparency achieved by having a workable register for all production, stockpiling and transfer of arms.

15. Chemical and biological warfare are particularly inhumane. Important steps towards their eradication have been taken through the conclusion of the Biological Weapons and Chemical Weapons Conventions. The former must however be complemented by verification mechanisms, while the latter has yet to enter into force. Both must be adhered to and effectively implemented so that never again can such weapons be developed, stockpiled or used. Existing stocks must also be eliminated.

16. When war has ended, anti-personnel mines continue to exact their toll. These are particularly insidious weapons which strike blindly, mainly at civilians. Each year tens of thousands are killed and several times that number are brutally maimed. Anti-personnel mines also constitute a serious impediment to development since millions of acres of arable land remain unusable. It is simply not possible today to accept the continued use of mines. Progress has been made in addressing the problem, and it is urgent to arrive at a total ban of land mines, their production, sale and use. Existing stocks must also be eliminated and appropriate techniques and large-scale programmes for effective mine clearance must be developed and adequately funded particularly as part of peace-building efforts.

17. International terrorism and criminality constitute further serious threats to peace and security in the world. They cause regional tension which imperils political stability and constitutes serious obstacles to development. It is imperative that all States work effectively together to put an end to these phenomena.

18. Prevention is better than cure. Avoiding conflict is far better than having to deal with its consequences once it has erupted. It is far cheaper too, both in human and monetary terms. Common sense would suggest this approach be given priority. Yet, governments everywhere are working under severe budgetary constraints and are loath to look far ahead. Prevention requires political courage, so that strictly national short-term interests do not prevail and lead to too little action, much too late.

19. While prevention may benefit from international and regional consultation based on an improved and workable system of early warning and policy planning, fact-finding missions and, sometimes, the deployment of international forces to prevent an outbreak of hostilities while negotiations are carried out, it is first and foremost a question of addressing the root causes of potential conflicts. Sadly, these often stem from continuing foreign occupation and age-old ethnic divisions to which are added a range of problems of an economic and social nature. Poverty, endemic under-development, weak or non-existent institutions, dependence and instability are important sources of conflict and therefore at the very heart of achieving peace and security. The response must be to ensure sustainable human development.

SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

20. The outdated notions of peace and security as being solely the responsibility of and affecting only States must be abandoned. Security is first and foremost a question of people; human security is as important as national security. It is the survival and well-being of people which must be the driving force for action during the next century. Similarly, development can be sustained only to the extent that it is human centred. It must be geared to meet the needs of peoples and this can only be successfully achieved by ensuring their full and unhindered participation. This in turn calls for democratic structures, improved social and economic justice, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

21. Attaining the requisite economic and social progress is both imperative and possible. It can only be done, however, by integrating into planning the fact that interdependence in the

world will continue to grow, not diminish, in the next century. Interdependence between States. Interdependence between countries whose development has been accompanied by wasted resources and unchecked accumulation of wastes and those which for lack of means are forced to compromise their assets and their environment, yet are unable to produce the bare essentials of a satisfactory life. Interlinkages between some of the major problems of humanity: population growth, migrations, uncontrolled urbanization, illness, poverty. Finally, meeting our own needs should not be done at the expense of those of future generations.

22. The global international conferences and summits organized by the United Nations in recent years and the Secretary-General's report on *An Agenda for Development* have gone far to enhance our understanding of the issues at stake and the policies needed to attain sustainable human development. It is now necessary to ensure their translation into practice through the implementation of specific programmes and actions.

23. It is imperative to close the widening gap between rich and poor, between and within countries. Any practical strategy for sustainable development demands that basic needs of the population be met as a matter of the highest priority. It is essential to establish the strategies, programmes and time-tables which are needed to eradicate extreme poverty and, eventually, all forms of poverty. This will require institutional measures that ensure that the rights of the poor are protected and fully implemented. It also means achieving advances in science and technology which focus on improving agriculture and food production, developing appropriate technologies for industry, ensuring energy supplies and health care, and providing sound environmental management.

24. It has never before been more obvious that development is closely dependent on the status which women enjoy. Men and women must enjoy equal rights in every respect. The indications of a growing feminization of poverty are utterly unacceptable and it is manifest that development can only be achieved and sustained through the full participation of women in every area of social, economic and political life. Women and men are different but nonetheless equal, and only by their working in partnership can the community's problems be tackled effectively. Gender equality is also at the core of ensuring equity in the distribution of the benefits of growth. Thus, women as well as men must be placed at the core of any strategy for sustainable development.

25. Beyond specific programmes in areas of employment, health and education, this will require changed perceptions of roles. Without destabilizing cultures or imposing values foreign to the national culture, women's dignity must be respected and a more balanced image must be given of the capacity of men and women to participate in the management of private and public affairs. This requires changing the images and models transmitted through education, the media and advertising messages so as to eliminate suggestions that one sex is superior to the other.

26. "Integration of environment and development concerns and greater attention to them will lead to the fulfilment of basic needs, improved living standards for all, better protected and managed ecosystems and a safer, more prosperous future." Today, those words of *Agenda 21* ring with a renewed urgency. Further endeavours must be made to reconcile concerns of development with those of environment and concerns of equity with those of efficiency. It is imperative that efforts for sustainable development result in a significant reordering of priorities in the management of the world's finite resources, as well as in the development of renewable resources. The task is indeed massive, but there is no choice. Success in this undertaking constitutes the only option open to humanity.

27. The conventions on climate change and biodiversity as well as *Agenda 21* must be effectively implemented. No country can any longer afford to remain inactive. All must promote the development of sustainable human settlements and seek to change consumption patterns to reduce their disastrous effect on the environment. Integrated approaches must be applied to the planning and management of land resources and to the development, management and use of freshwater resources. It is imperative to protect the ocean and coastal zones, combat deforestation and desertification and reduce and

effectively manage wastes. Trade and environment must be made mutually supportive and, not the least, the developing countries must be provided with sufficient financial resources and access to safe and environmentally sound technology.

28. Sustained economic growth will remain the driving force behind development in the next century as much as it is today. It requires an enabling environment in which individual initiative is encouraged, not stifled, and open markets where products can be bought and sold. Competition and the liberalization of markets must continue to be encouraged, bearing in mind the need to protect, support and promote small- and medium-scale businesses. Governments need to have confidence in the market economy, but should ensure that the rule of law prevails, not the law of the jungle.

29. Massive unemployment currently exists in countries in every corner of the globe with its potential for social and political unrest and upheaval. Yet, there is no easy solution. A rise in production does not necessarily lead to a rise in employment. The application of sophisticated technologies frequently results in employment lagging behind production. And increased trade may result in less, not more, jobs being created. It is imperative that States urgently review their economic and social policies to ensure that job creation is given high priority and that more is done to understand the linkages between investment, employment, production and trade.

30. The conclusion of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, the establishment of the World Trade Organization and recent reductions of tariff barriers are major and welcome achievements. In many countries, trade has proved to be the most effective engine of economic growth, generating the resources required for eradicating poverty. All the more important then to carry the process further by examining also non-trade barriers such as voluntary export restraints, export subsidies, domestic taxes and similar trade restrictions, as well as health and sanitary regulations. There must be greater transparency regarding such barriers and the ultimate aim must be their removal.

31. Yet, no manner of industriousness will permit heavily indebted developing countries to achieve sustainable human development while continuing to service their debt. Advances have been made, but a serious crisis persists and even escalates for poorer countries, particularly those in Africa, many of which have been devastated by drought, famine and other disasters. A lasting and global solution must be found to the debt problem, in particular through debt forgiveness, the streamlined rescheduling of debt, the cancellation of a part thereof, especially for the poorer countries, and a significant reduction in interest rates.

32. For many years to come, developing countries will continue to require increased and predictable financial resources from the North and from multilateral institutions. There is an urgent need to reach the target of transferring 0.7 percent of the Gross National Product as Official Development Assistance. Achieving this target is critical to alleviating absolute poverty and to building sustainable development. It is vital to the management of the world economy and should be seen as an international obligation. Such assistance should also be supplemented with transfers from available resources in the private sector. There is, however, a need for governments to create a national economic environment conducive to direct foreign investment. Moreover, there is a need to implement a "20-20" compact whereby developing countries and donor countries would earmark, respectively, at least 20 per cent of their budget and at least 20 per cent of the amount of their aid to human development projects.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

33. "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace. It is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by law." Those opening words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ring as true today as they did almost fifty years ago when they were drafted. All States must give a renewed commitment to ensure respect for the full gamut of civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights.

34. The idea of democracy must be reaffirmed strongly. While each State will have to develop its own model suitable to its own history, culture and particular circumstances, it is nonetheless true that everywhere democracy is a political philosophy, a system of government, in which the citizens exercise the right to make political decisions through representatives who are chosen by them and who are responsible to them. The Secretary-General's report on action to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies provides the nucleus of an agenda for democracy which needs to be built upon and to which the IPU is committed to extend its full support.

35. Democracy can only have real meaning insofar as women take part in the decision-making process on a basis of equal rights with men, both legally and in practice. It is entirely unacceptable that there are still countries in the world where women are denied the fundamental right to participate in the political life of the nation. All countries must urgently implement the *Plan of Action to Correct Present Imbalances in the Participation of Men and Women in Political Life*, adopted by IPU in 1994, as a first step so that parity and partnership between men and women become a reality everywhere.

36. Democracy also means that all components of society must be able to participate in the political process: political trends, sexes, races, ethnic groups and minorities, indigenous peoples. Indeed, the authority of the democratic institutions, starting with parliament itself, derives from their capacity to reflect faithfully the rich diversity of the nation and the different views which exist.

37. In any State, the authority of the government can only derive from the will of the people as expressed in genuine, free and fair elections held at regular intervals on the basis of universal, equal and secret suffrage. It is therefore necessary to continue to work everywhere for the application of the *Declaration of Criteria for Free and Fair Elections*, adopted by IPU in Paris in 1994 and, to this end, the United Nations General Assembly should consider adopting these criteria as the global standard.

38. Transparency and openness are also essential to well-functioning democracy. The freedom of the media is an essential component of a democratic society, yet there is rightly concern at the perverse effects of today's reporting. The fickle and fast moving eye of television can demand attention one minute, only to ignore the issue the next. This is reporting dangerously close to entertainment. There is a risk of mankind losing over time the ability to establish intelligent priorities. Thus, political leaders everywhere, in government and parliament, have more than ever an increased responsibility to demonstrate vision by giving priority to looking down the road ahead and thereby setting themselves the political agenda.

39. A democratic society is one which practises tolerance. The ugly scenes of recent years involving attacks on racial, ethnic and religious groups and minorities should serve to remind us of a darker period in the history of mankind. Attitudes of xenophobia, racism and intolerance must be left behind once and for all. They never were acceptable and even less can they have a place in tomorrow's rapidly interdependent world. On the eve of the next century mankind must finally learn to practise tolerance and certainly not exploit intolerance for political gains.

40. In order to take firm roots and flourish, democracy requires not only well functioning and representative institutions, but also a culture of democracy. At all levels of society, awareness of and commitment to participation and consultation are essential and need to be promoted. This requires that emphasis be placed on civic education programmes.

STRUCTURES FOR INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

41. Over one century ago, the Inter-Parliamentary Union provided the origins for multilateral co-operation in its institutionalized form as it is known today. Indeed, through its very establishment it constituted the first permanent forum for multilateral negotiations and persistently advocated the establishment of corresponding institutions at the inter-governmental level. These calls were realized, first with the creation of the League of Nations and then with the United Nations.

42. As humanity is about to embark on a new

century there is cause to regret the apparent lessening in State interest in multilateral co-operation. Indeed, there are disturbing signs of fatigue and even indifference towards international co-operation. A steadily growing number of countries are increasingly focusing their attention on satisfying immediate national needs, disregarding medium and long-term goals to be achieved both at home and abroad. Whether from lack of popular support or economic difficulties, less resources are being devoted to international co-operation.

43. Today, the time has come to give fresh impetus to multilateral co-operation. There is a need to reaffirm in the strongest and most unequivocal terms that there is, and can never be, any alternative to multilateral co-operation. No single State today or tomorrow, has or will have, the necessary resources backed up by the requisite political support to intervene alone when situations grow out of hand and threaten all humanity. Working with other States to resolve the challenges to peace and security, sustainable human development and respect for human rights and democracy is not a question of charity. Multilateral co-operation is acting in the enlightened self-interest of States.

44. All States and political leaders are therefore solemnly urged to give renewed and strengthened commitments to international co-operation. They must make the fullest and most efficient use of the multilateral structures which have been developed over the years. In this they should apply the subsidiarity principle much more rigorously than hitherto. Regional organizations should be used much more extensively as foreseen in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter to deal with purely local, sub-regional and regional issues. At the same time, there must be a recognition of the varying capacities and interests of those involved in regional organizations to meet all such demands and the United Nations system should always be kept in reserve, as well as for those issues of international concern which go beyond the regional context. States should also be less reluctant to confer a role upon the United Nations in the implementation of strategies, and in any case should reinforce the United Nations capacity for normative action, which it is particularly apt to undertake.

45. IPU also reaffirms its belief in the United Nations and its sister organizations. The detractors of the United Nations are cautioned not to criticise it for what it was never meant or equipped to do. The United Nations is not a world government. It is an international organization which was set up and controlled by governments. States are the providers of specific mandates for the World Organization. They are the ones that give, or do not give, the resources and support which are necessary to carry out the tasks. The United Nations' successes, but also its failures, are therefore those of its members.

46. There is clearly room for improvement. Like every other organization, the United Nations needs to adapt its structures and working methods and reorder its priorities to suit the demands of the world of tomorrow. The malfunctioning of the United Nations is, however, less the result of inadequate structures than the lack of a clear will on the part of States to use them well. Indeed, States must make up their minds as to what they want the United Nations to be, what they want it to do and what they are willing to contribute to make it work.

47. When planning for reform, the strengthening of the main organs of the UN to enable them to discharge their functions more effectively is of pivotal importance. The United Nations General Assembly needs to be revived and the Security Council needs reform to make it more representative and democratic while at the same time sustaining its authority and effectiveness. Its membership should be increased. Mechanisms should be found to render the work of the Council more transparent.

48. The financial solvency of the United Nations must be ensured. It is totally unacceptable that the Organization cannot dispose of the funds which have been approved by its members and which they are duty-bound to pay. Stricter measures need to be introduced to sanction non or late payment and thus facilitate the timely transfer of assessed contributions. There is also need for better budgetary discipline. Budgetary provisions need to be justified *per se*, and not just increases as compared to previous years' budgets. States should also be more consistent in their review of budgets and spending. Moreover, the expenses of the UN

must be shared by all member States in a more fair and equitable manner.

49. While cuts should not be made in the Organization for the sole purpose of achieving savings, important savings can be obtained by making a determined and system-wide effort to do away with overlapping mandates, streamline programmes and operations and make them more cost-efficient. The UN, its subsidiary bodies and the Specialized Agencies must undertake this task urgently and should ensure that there is a substantial element of independent assessment in this process.

50. It is clearly difficult to establish priorities for a world organization which needs to fulfil the expectations of all its members and not simply a handful of them. Even so, the United Nations cannot be all things to all people. It needs to focus its resources on where they are the most likely to achieve results.

51. The United Nations should encourage regional arrangements and organizations to play an increased role in resolving regional and local problems and conflicts and maintaining peace and security at a regional level. To this end, regional arrangements or organizations need to be strengthened to be able to shoulder increased responsibilities in this field consistent with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

52. It is likely that the need for peace-keeping missions will remain high for years to come. In carrying out those missions, the United Nations must have clear mandates with attainable objectives. There must be a peace to keep and a basic understanding between the parties of the role of the United Nations. The Organization must also be provided with adequate resources in a timely fashion. When such operations co-exist with humanitarian activities, the military action must retain its own dynamics and separate objectives and tasks, in order to preserve the independence, neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian action. The United Nations will need better resources to carry out these tasks. It also needs to train its own staff to facilitate the early and effective deployment of UN personnel.

53. Future UN peace-keeping operations will certainly remain of a complex nature requiring immediate humanitarian assistance, support for the establishment of representative institutions and structures for effective governance. Indeed, all require a strong human rights component. These operations must be complemented by medium and longer-term peace-building efforts to consolidate sustainable human development, including its economic, social, humanitarian, institutional and electoral aspects, thus creating a culture of peace. In that, the United Nations Secretariat must be able to count upon the full support of all the branches of the UN system.

54. The United Nations must play its role in designing a pattern of economic and social development co-operation based on open global markets, not protectionism; equitable sharing of opportunities, not charity; an open policy dialogue between sovereign States, not coercion. The current multilateral system composed of the United Nations, its Specialized Agencies in this field and the Bretton Woods institutions demands improvement, reform, consistency and convergence. There is need for a comprehensive review of current multilateral practices in this field, and to agree on areas for reform and improvement in the context of an interdependent world economic system.

55. A priority for the United Nations must involve doing away with overlaps and redundancies. States carry a particular responsibility to ensure that they do not continue past practices of urging the creation of yet more Offices and structures. Another priority area involves ensuring co-ordination. The results of recent international conferences organized by the United Nations can serve as a basis. Welcome steps have already been taken by the Economic and Social Council to ensure implementation, system-wide co-ordination and the avoidance of duplication. These efforts could be greatly enhanced and facilitated by a consolidated plan of action stemming from these conferences. The success of these co-ordination efforts at the international level will greatly depend on equivalent action being taken at the national level by each government to co-ordinate its domestic policies towards the United Nations.

56. The United Nations must strengthen its activities and establish priorities in the field of human rights. The establishment of the Office of

the High Commissioner for Human Rights is a welcome development, as are the initiatives being taken to reform and improve the performance of the Centre for Human Rights as part of the Office of the High Commissioner. This should lead to a more integrated and co-ordinated treatment of human rights issues by the United Nations system as a whole. In this field, in particular, the United Nations should improve its relations with and make better use of its non-governmental partners.

57. Throughout the reform process, the primary aim should be to ensure social and economic justice, fairness, equity and transparency in multilateral governance, and the application of democratic principles in decision-making processes, as well as the achievement of the expressed goals as regards gender equality for UN staff. To be efficient, effective and transparent, the institutions should be equipped with the required power and authority and with agreed systems of dispute settlement. It is not essential that multilateral institutions should always be UN agencies. Multilateralism can thrive within and outside the UN system.

THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS

58. Parliament is a key institution in the organization and functioning of the State. Its fundamental role is to express the will of the people at State level where it is the lawmaker and overseer of government action. Frequently, it is called upon to take decisions relating to the work carried out in the United Nations, for example when ratifying a United Nations convention or treaty or when approving the financial credits for the country's contribution towards the World Organization.

59. In the normal course of its work, parliament is however more and more called upon to concern itself with international issues as a whole. Indeed, the problems which today are debated in parliaments and the solutions they require are increasingly transnational and it is difficult to imagine any subject which a parliament deals with on a daily basis which is not affected by events beyond the country's borders and also the subject of international negotiations. There is every interest for national parliaments in having a closer involvement in the work carried out in international fora, particularly the United Nations.

60. Strengthening the relationship with national parliaments cannot but be beneficial to the United Nations. In whichever field it works, successful action of the United Nations requires that it have the support of peoples around the world. Parliaments, made up of men and women who are elected by the citizens at large and are in direct contact with the population and associations of their constituencies, are also the most natural and legitimate institutions to represent the common interests of the various components of civil society. This needs to be recalled at a time when, happily, efforts are being made to ensure that the aspirations of civil society are being given greater heed in intergovernmental action. Action by parliaments and their members is crucial not only in implementing nationally the decisions which States have taken at the international level. It is also needed in relaying and explaining to the public the issues involved and therefore also in forging popular support for international action.

61. Promoting closer co-operation between the United Nations and national parliaments should then greatly facilitate the normal work of parliaments as well as that of the United Nations. IPU, as the world organization of parliaments, is committed to reinforcing this co-operation. Through action in the IPU, political support can be extended to the United Nations in all the fields in which it is active as well as operational support in the fields of democracy, governance and human rights, for example in United Nations peace-keeping and peace-building operations.

62. There is therefore a need for the conclusion of a formal agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union laying down an adequate framework for co-operation between the two organizations and enabling the IPU to contribute fully to the political work of the United Nations. This would also serve the UN and its member States to define a new relationship with the world organization of parliaments, mirroring at the international level the relationship which exists at the national level between government and the parliament; a timely exercise when high priority is given to democracy and good governance.